


Sheriff Prozzo to seek eighth term

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Sullivan County Sheriff Michael Prozzo has announced he is seeking an eighth straight term as the county's highest ranking law enforcement official.

"My philosophy is to serve the citizens of Sullivan County the best that I can

 **Newport** for the least amount of money," Prozzo said. "My life has been law enforcement."

Prozzo began his career in 1971 as an 18-year-old patrolman with the Claremont Police Department. Over the years he rose through the ranks attaining sergeant in 1973, lieutenant in 1978, captain in 1988 and finally as chief of police that same year — a position he held for six years.

"I've been in law enforcement for 38 years and it's been self rewarding," Prozzo said. "I've had a great career and I enjoy the people and being a team player."

Prozzo was first elected sheriff in 1995 when there was much

competition for the coveted position.

"The first year when I ran there were five of us running," Prozzo said. "Since then I have run unopposed."

During his tenure, Prozzo said he is most proud of running a department that works smoothly and helps the citizens of the county.

"I serve all the people," Prozzo said. "I don't care who you are because you need to be responsible to all the people."

During the last 14 years as sheriff, Prozzo has brought in more than \$1.5 million in grants to the county from state and federal funds.

"It has cost the county little, if anything at all," Prozzo said.

His latest grant is a highway safety grant to be used for extra DWI patrols during the summer.

"When I came here, we didn't do any of that," Prozzo said. "We were a traditional sheriff's department. Now we probably do eight to 10 different grants over the course of the year. By having

those grants we're able to limit our costs taxpayers would normally pick up."

Prozzo said he has also worked to maintain a balanced and even budget.

"When I took over there were seven full-time and 22 part-time positions," Prozzo said. "Now I have three full-time deputies and seven part-timers. The changes have made the organization better. I give more responsibility to the deputies and instead of specializing, everyone does everything."

When Prozzo submitted his budget for the upcoming fiscal year, it was \$2,900 less than the current budget.

"I'm trying to increase services to citizens and local police departments while maintaining a stable budget," Prozzo said.

Married for 25 years with two children and three grandchildren, Prozzo said he is not ready to retire.

"When I don't think I'm contributing anymore, then I'll be done," Prozzo said.